

**GOOD MORNING. I AM RICK MCLEOD...EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE COMMUNITY REUSE ORGANIZATION.**

**OURS IS A NON-PROFIT REGIONAL GROUP SUPPORTING JOB CREATION IN A FIVE-COUNTY REGION OF GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA NEAR D-O-E'S SAVANNAH RIVER SITE. WE ARE UNIQUE AMONG D-O-E COMMUNITIES IN THAT OUR AREA OF INTEREST COVERS TWO STATES.**

**WHEN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ABRUPTLY PULLED THE PLUG ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN, IT LEFT SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES IN THE DARK AND FROZEN OUT OF THE PROCESS DESIGNED TO ANSWER THE CRITICAL QUESTIONS: WHY SHOULD WE ABANDON YUCCA MOUNTAIN AND WHAT WILL TAKE ITS PLACE?**

**FROM HANFORD TO IDAHO TO MY HOME REGION, SAVANNAH RIVER, AND AT COMMERCIAL NUCLEAR SITES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, WE HAVE DEPENDED FOR DECADES ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES THAT THE NUCLEAR WASTE AND SPENT FUEL THAT NOW RESIDES IN OUR COMMUNITIES WOULD BE MOVED TO A PERMANENT REPOSITORY.**

**I HOPE YOU CAN APPRECIATE THE OUTRAGE GENERATED IN OUR REGION AND NATIONALLY BY THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECENT ACTIONS TO TERMINATE, WITH PREJUDICE, THE LICENSE APPLICATION PROCESS WITH THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION ... SHUT DOWN THE YUCCA MOUNTAIN PROGRAM WITHIN SIX MONTHS ... AND PREFER THAT THIS PANEL NOT CONSIDER THE ONLY PROVEN MEANS FOR DISPOSAL OF HIGH LEVEL WASTE AND SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL.**

**D-O-E'S ACTION HAS THE EFFECT OF TURNING THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE AND MANY OTHER LOCATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY INTO *DE FACTO* PERMANENT STORAGE SITES. THIS IS AN INTOLERABLE SITUATION WHICH HAS SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM IMPACTS, AND DOES NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM – ESPECIALLY FOR HIGH LEVEL DEFENSE WASTES.**

**WHILE SUPPORTIVE, WE ARE SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED THAT MANY HAVE BEEN FORCED INTO TAKING THE EXTREME MEASURE OF MULTIPLE LAWSUITS AGAINST DOE AND NRC TO REQUIRE THEIR MEETING THE RESPONSIBILITIES SPECIFIED IN THE NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT AND TO PRESERVE YUCCA MOUNTAIN AS THE NATION'S HIGH LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY UNLESS AND UNTIL THE LAW IS CHANGED.**

TO ADD INSULT, THERE IS NO MEMBER ON YOUR PANEL WHICH REPRESENTS THE PARTS OF OUR SOCIETY MOST AFFECTED BY THESE DELIBERATIONS. THIS PANEL HAS MANY DISTINGUISHED TOPICAL AND POLICY EXPERTS, BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE A VOICE REPRESENTING THE COUNTLESS MILLIONS WHO LIVE IN THE HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITIES NEAR FEDERAL AND COMMERCIAL NUCLEAR SITES.

YOUR WORK IS IMPORTANT – AS IMPORTANT AS THE SAFE LONG-TERM DISPOSITION OF NUCLEAR WASTES. WE WANT YOUR PANEL TO SUCCEED BECAUSE MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS, AND THE FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS IN ALL THOSE OTHER COMMUNITIES DESERVE A SPEEDY, DECISIVE AND ASSURED OUTCOME TO YOUR PROCEEDINGS. SO, WE ARE HERE TODAY NOT AS ADVERSARIES BUT AS ALLIES.

WE HAVE THREE SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AS YOU COMPLETE FORMATION OF YOUR PANEL AND BEGIN YOUR DELIBERATIONS.

FIRST, WE RESPECTFULLY INSIST THAT AFFECTED COMMUNITIES HAVE REPRESENTATION ON AND DIRECT INPUT INTO THE PANEL’S DELIBERATIONS.

WHAT YOUR PANEL RECOMMENDS WILL IMPACT US IN THE NUCLEAR COMMUNITIES MORE THAN ANY OTHER GROUP. FAIRNESS DICTATES THAT WE HAVE MORE THAN CASUAL INPUT.

WHILE WE DO NOT NEED A “VOTE AT THE TABLE”, WE DO NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION WHICH WILL INVARIABLY LEAD TO ANY VOTE OR RECOMMENDATIONS BY THIS PANEL.

AFFECTED COMMUNITIES ALSO INCLUDE STATE GOVERNMENTS. THERE NEEDS TO BE A MECHANISM FOR OBTAINING AND CONSIDERING INPUT FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF AFFECTED STATES.

FAILURE TO SOLICIT THIS INPUT AND INCORPORATE IT WILL SERIOUSLY WEAKEN YOUR FINAL PRODUCT.

SECOND, ANY REVIEW OF POTENTIAL DISPOSITION OPTIONS FOR HIGH LEVEL WASTE MUST INCLUDE YUCCA MOUNTAIN AS ONE OPTION.

**YUCCA MOUNTAIN IS THE ONLY KNOWN MEANS TO DISPOSE OF HIGH LEVEL WASTE, AND IT MUST NOT BE DISCARDED UNLESS AND UNTIL A BETTER DISPOSAL OPTION HAS BEEN DETERMINED AND VERIFIED.**

**THERE ARE NO DISPOSAL OPTIONS FOR DEFENSE HIGH LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE OTHER THAN GEOLOGIC DISPOSAL. UNLIKE SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL, THERE ARE NO “PROCESSING” OPTIONS WHICH CAN MINIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF THESE MATERIALS REQUIRING DISPOSAL.**

**IN ADDITION, MANY OF THESE MATERIALS HAVE BEEN PROCESSED IN AN IRREVERSABLE PROCEDURE INTO GLASS LOGS SPECIFICALLY TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH YUCCA MOUNTAIN, AND THEY MAY NOW BE UNSUITABLE FOR ANY OTHER GEOLOGIC DISPOSAL OPTION. FOR THOSE OF US WHO LIVE NEAR D-O-E SITES WITH DEFENSE HIGH LEVEL WASTES, A GEOLOGIC REPOSITORY AT YUCCA MOUNTAIN HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE ONLY ANSWER. THERE IS NOT NOW – NOR HAS THERE EVER BEEN – A PLAN B.**

**THIRD, WE SUPPORT PROCESSING OPTIONS AS ONE MEANS TO REDUCE THE QUANTITIES OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL.**

**THE NEED FOR A YUCCA MOUNTAIN CAPABILITY VARIES WITH THE PROCESSING OPTION TO BE DEVELOPED; HOWEVER EVEN IF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL PROCESS IS CHOSEN AS AN OPTION A PERMANENT HIGH LEVEL WASTE DISPOSAL OPTION WILL STILL BE REQUIRED.**

**EVEN BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED IT WAS HALTING WORK ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN, OUR COMMUNITY LEADERS HAD BEEN HARD AT WORK STUDYING THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR REGION IF YUCCA MOUNTAIN WAS NEVER OPENED.**

**WE PREPARED A 27-PAGE WHITE PAPER DESIGNED TO SERVE AS A CATALYST FOR PUBLIC DIALOG CONCERNING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION TO HALT WORK ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN AS THE NATION’S PERMANENT NUCLEAR WASTE REPOSITORY. I HAVE BROUGHT COPIES OF THE PAPER FOR REVIEW BY THE PANEL.**

**WE TRUST THAT YOU WILL NOT ALLOW NUCLEAR WASTE TO CONTINUE TO BE A POLITICAL FOOTBALL....ONCE AGAIN KICKED DOWN THE ROAD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS... BUT WILL WORK DILIGENTLY TO ENSURE THAT EXISTING LAW IS FOLLOWED AND THAT THE**

**WASTE WE NOW HOST IN OUR COMMUNITY FINDS THE PERMANENT HOME IT WAS PROMISED.**

**WE ALSO TRUST YOU WILL ENSURE THAT THE COMMUNITIES THAT ARE MOST AFFECTED BY THIS ILL-CONCEIVED DECISION TO STOP WORK ON THE NATION'S BEST ANSWER TO LONG-TERM WASTE STORAGE HAVE A VOICE IN DETERMINING THE PATH FORWARD.**

**THIS JOB MUST BE DONE TODAY AND NOT LEFT FOR OUR CHILDREN OR THEIR CHILDREN. LET US ALL BE ABLE TO SAY THAT, WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THIS CHALLENGE, WE MET IT TOGETHER, AND WE MET IT NOW.**

**THANK YOU.**